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**1994 CJCS STRATEGY ESSAY WRITING  
COMPETITION ENTRY**

**NATO MOVES EAST**

by

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## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** *NATO Moves East*

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*The question of membership in NATO for the former member of the Warsaw Pact countries, to include Russia and the "new democracies" formed from the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been thoroughly debated. Historically, membership has been based on furthering the security needs of the alliance and countering the Soviet threat. Several areas are investigated in this paper as they affect the membership question. These areas include previous membership requirements, French withdrawal, conflicts between allies, burdensharing between members, the German unification experience, the Russian reaction and the recently introduced program called Partnership for Peace. A large security vacuum was caused by the implosion of the Soviet Union. NATO must move quickly and decisively if it is to play a role in the future of East Europe.*

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# **NATO MOVES EAST**

## **Introduction**

Just as the NATO Alliance members celebrate victory after four decades of cold war, the very existence of the organization is threatened. Despite the elation of those who held the line against Soviet expansion, did the West win the cold war or must victory be shared with the peoples of eastern Europe who suffered nearly fifty years of oppression and finally took to the streets? Does the West, through NATO, have a responsibility to those people now? The dissolution of the Soviet threat and the emergence of numerous European multi-lateral organizations lead many to believe NATO no longer serves a purpose. The premise of this paper is not to evaluate the continuation or demise of NATO, rather it assumes continuation for the near term and investigates expansion of membership to the East. The overriding question that faces the sixteen members of NATO is whether East-Central European countries (Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic and Slovakia) and the emerging independent republics of the former Soviet Union should be accepted for membership in the Atlantic Alliance. This paper will provide an historical perspective on membership, investigate conditions that may affect decisions on membership, dissect current issues within the alliance, such as out-of-area interest and burden sharing and the impact of these concerns on the membership question, and finally to tie this information to the recently created Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative within NATO.

Beyond question, NATO has played an important if not pivotal role in the unprecedented stability enjoyed by a generation of Europeans. However, with the dramatic events of the recent past, Europe now faces a crucial crossroads, with war at the southern doorstep and political instability ever present to the immediate east. Our European allies, as well as US policy makers, must set a strategy for the

future in the East-Central region; a comprehensive approach to Europe and the former Soviet Republics is needed. Clear priorities must be established to include security, economic, and moral dimensions. The West must create a political and strategic vision to address the causes of potential instability before it is too late.(1) Behind the Soviet collapse lie destabilizing forces of weak economies, damaged environments, ethnic clashes, and large caches of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. As these countries struggle for identity and even survival, a clear collective security vacuum exists. If this crisis is not addressed, it may further deteriorate to open conflict, such as Yugoslavia, and is unlikely to be easily contained. Can NATO contribute to the regional stability on the political as well as the economic front in the future? Specifically, would NATO membership, in some form, contribute to this stability as well as enhance a measure of success in the reform process?

NATO is a defensive alliance born to balance a bipolar world with a commonly perceived threat. However, it was not without great difficulty that its final form and membership were tirelessly debated until a viable security arrangement could be signed and ratified. Articles 4 and 5 below outline the critical substance of the treaty signed on 4 April 1949.

**Article 4**

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any Party is threatened.

**Article 5**

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all....

All parties understood that Article 4 had the potential of being used by members of the alliance to meddle in the global affairs of one another or to be drawn into a signatory's out-of-area problem.(2) Additionally, the two Articles provide security

guarantees which were foundational to stability in Europe. It is in the context of these two Articles that provide the major concern to open membership for East-Central European countries and former Soviet bloc countries.

It is inaccurate to suggest NATO alone provided stability to Europe after World War II. Many organizations have been formed to provide economic as well as political stability in the region. Along with NATO's sixteen member countries, Europe has the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) as part of NATO with members including former Warsaw Pact countries and the newly independent states in Eurasia; the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) members; the Council of Europe; the European Community (EC); the European Free Trade Association (EFTA); the Western European Union (WEU); and the Nordic Council.(3) Each was primarily concerned with political and economic issues until changes were made to the WEU mandate in December 1991. Prior to the WEU mandate, NATO was the only treaty which specifically provided security guarantees. The above list of organizations reflect complex economic, political, and security arrangements that are linked with past experiences as well as hopes for a new era of peace and stability.

The issue is membership in NATO for countries of the former Soviet bloc. To fully explore the impact of such a move, it is helpful to provide the pros and cons of this issue. Generally, the argument to expand membership recognizes the volatility of the region in question and an opportunity to fill the security vacuum with an alliance based on democratic principles, restraint, and the observation of human rights. It recognizes that countries in search of identity and nationalism need security arrangements to focus on nation building versus army building. Although the survival of NATO is beyond the scope of this paper, if it is to survive into the twenty-first century, NATO must open new avenues of purpose and boldly provide leadership to "legitimize" the new international order. Americas future

engagement in new security arrangements within the whole of Europe may well be determined by the actions of NATO towards the membership question.

Those in opposition to new membership correctly note the instability in the newly independent countries and feel NATO should not be drawn into internal unrest and problems. Russia, certainly going through unsettling political turmoil, would view any expansion to the East as a direct threat against her. Finally, they argue that the interest of the alliance is not best served by expansion and new countries may only add to the growing burden of the alliance. The underlying opposition to expansion, while it may recognize a need to reorder the European security arrangement, may in fact ultimately be attempting to drive a wedge between Europe and the US.

To properly evaluate the merit of membership, I have drawn from several past experiences of the alliance and current policies debates between the United States and her European partners. These six major areas are the French withdrawal, German unification, conflicts between allies, the Russian problem, current issues of the alliance, the path to membership, and finally an analysis of the partnership for peace program.

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### **Membership in the Alliance**

The original terms of the North Atlantic Treaty included seven nations composed of the US, Canada, and the five signatories of the 1948 Brussels Defense Pact (Britain, France, and the Benelux states). As talks progressed, it became apparent the list of treaty participants demanded to be increased. After a Soviet defense treaty was imposed on Finland in 1948, US planners felt a need to protect the northern approaches to the Atlantic. Thereby Greenland, Denmark, and Norway were included in the Treaty. Other alliance concerns included securing bases needed as stepping stones to Europe as well as shoring up of the Southern Flank.

Portugal was offered membership, thereby gaining access to the Azores. It is interesting to note that Spain was denied entry due to supporting a totalitarian regime, yet Portugal's leader, Antonio Salazar, was an unapologetic defender of colonialism in Africa and a clear opponent of democracy in his own country.(4) The alliance founded on the principles of democracy found it convenient to look the other way to meet the needs of new membership initiatives. Greece and Turkey had communicated their interest in becoming signatory members to the alliance. They were initially rebuffed on the grounds that extending the alliance into the Eastern Mediterranean would undermine the North Atlantic character.(5) Finally, in 1952, in order to deter the Soviet threat in the Southern region and to shore up the defense of Europe with their significant force commitment, Turkey and Greece were included under the NATO umbrella. History of the alliance suggests membership is based more on demands to shore up the alliance than grand principles of democracy or large force offerings.

What lessons are found in the French withdrawal that NATO policy makers may apply to expansionist thinking? First, France at the time was undergoing a strong resurgence of national will. America's self-perceived interests were politically unacceptable to de Gaulle. However, much of France's heated criticism of US and NATO policy was intended for internal consumption. Second, the nature of a bipolar world and the centralized decision process for nuclear response (dual key procedure with the US) delegated France to a second-class citizen status in her own territory. This position, although possibly justifiable under the cold war scenario, would be unacceptable in a multipolar world. Third, an apparent insensitivity by US leadership is evidenced by the failure to consult allies during the Cuban missile crisis and the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in October 1986 at Reykjavik. This confirmed Europe's worst nightmares of superpower domination of their security interests.(6) Finally, it is important to recognize that France never intended to



destroy the alliance. Despite the rhetoric, she believed the security arrangement necessary, kept forces in Germany, and continued to play a role in the future development of stability of NATO and Europe.

Looking ahead US and NATO planners must not create an alliance based solely on past experience and threat. Potential new members will likely function under weak governments and economies. Nationalism and sense of identity will be critical to the people and leaders. Whereas France chose to distance itself from NATO as a declaration of independence and statement of nationalism, newly independent countries are in search of a new security alliance, strengthen national identity, and create a strong connection to the West. With nationalism and identity comes the need to be consulted as part of the diplomatic process and not as an "unequal equal." It is not difficult to draw a parallel between France's status in NATO and the emerging democracies of the East. France's experience suggests that some "unique" status of membership with less than full responsibility, contribution, and coverage may be possible if serious negotiations were initiated from the West.

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### **German Unification**

The German unification provides a unique opportunity to view the unfolding of over 50 years of suppression of 17 million people. The economic consequences of unity is becoming apparent. The cost to Germany will be great as years of neglect, mismanagement, and destruction to infrastructure and environment is revealed. In March 1993, the Bonn parliament approved a solidarity pact which commits approximately seven percent of the GNP to the East over the next decade--roughly one trillion Deutsche marks.(7) The West and NATO can certainly draw from the German experience as it considers expanding membership. Unfortunately for the newly independent countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and

Slovakia, they don't have a "rich uncle" to assist in the incredibly difficult road to political and economic recovery. However, capitalism offers the opportunity to recover from their desperate economic situation. Conversely, they will not undergo the difficult moral and psychological consequences of unification that Germans have only now come to realize. Although both Germanys shared a common language and history, deep divisions brought on by 40 years of diametrically opposed paths were created.

It is reasonable to predict that attempts to assimilate East European countries into the Atlantic Alliance will produce frustrations and political maneuvering unlike any experience in history. The newly liberated countries reach out for a market economy at a time of European recession.(8) Suddenly a people subjected to totalitarian regimes are expected to become participants in political dialogue, take responsibility, think for themselves, and make choices. So far, freedom has brought uncertainty, unemployment, and loss of safety nets. The end of Communism did not provide instant rehabilitation and improvement in their living standard. The euphoria is gone. East Germans are beginning to feel humiliation, defeat, and subjugation by their superiors to the west. Easterners describe reunification as a "hostile takeover" and compare their part of Germany today to the American South after the Civil War. They call the buyers of Eastern industry "carpet baggers."(9)

There is a tendency to erase from memory the hopelessness of the old regime and remember that at some level of subsistence ordinary citizens could count on essentials of life: housing, however wretched; food, however meager; medical care, however inferior.(10) We can anticipate similar conditions and reactions to Western advances of aid, assistance, and even alliance membership. Above all, the West must create an atmosphere of trust where there currently exists a deficit of trust incomprehensible to Americans. The English philosopher John Dunn has spoken of trust as the core element of democracy.(11) This is the human side of the

tragedy which must be considered when evaluating the propriety and even the possibility of expanding the alliance east.

However, the German experience provides a cloudy view of the problem. Their problem was magnified by the suddenness with which the transfer occurred, yet was eased somewhat by the strength of their cultural heritage, language, and resolve to insure that unity succeed. As previously noted, other countries will not have a "rich uncle", therefore the alliance must prepare itself for the inefficiency, turmoil, and neglect of the armed forces in the newly formed countries. It must also keep in mind that those forces may be the most stable institution as well as the institution best suited to expand democracy within the country borders. As we have witnessed in recent months, the Russian military has been indispensable to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's support base. Unfortunately even that support has waned since the elections in December 1993.

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### **Intra-Alliance Conflicts**

It is well documented that democracies rarely go to war with one another, although democracies are not more peace prone than other regimes.(12) However, these studies also refute that "alliance bonds" cause involvement in conflicts. In other words, allies do not drag their partners into conflicts in which they have no national interest. Conversely, allies are far more likely than expected to engage in conflict with one another regardless of regime type.(13) Therefore, an examination of a conflict between NATO allies may be instructive to the continued question of membership expansion.

In 1974, Greece and Turkey became embroiled in a dispute over the island of Cyprus. As mentioned earlier, Greece and Turkey were initially stalled in their original membership request due to concerns about dilution of US armament funds to support a military build-up in the South and diverting attention from the

Central-Europe focus of the alliance. An associate status as envisioned in 1950, yet this plan was overcome by events of the Korean War and both countries became full members by 1952. By 1955, Greek-Cypriot terrorism directed at British and Turkish Cypriots had evolved into reprisals against Greeks in Istanbul. Greece withdrew its officers from NATO's regional headquarters in Izmir, Turkey. This move, while not serious, demonstrates that national displeasure with an ally can be effectively brought to international attention through a peaceful but dramatic initiative. Without such an alliance or vehicle, how could a country such as Greece send a strong signal of great displeasure, short of open hostility?

Greek internal politics were very turbulent throughout the mid-1960s. On 21 April 1967, a military dictatorship assumed control of Greece. The military junta in Greece brought about the forceful ouster of President Makarios on 15 July 1974. The pace of events quickened as Turkey was concerned for the safety of the Cypriot-Turks and invaded the island on 20 July 1974. Within four hours after the invasion, Greece announced the withdrawal of Greece's armed forces from the NATO military command.

The significance of this action is divulged later by the Greek Prime Minister who admitted being limited to two options: the declaration of war on Turkey or the acceptance of a limited link with NATO.<sup>(14)</sup> One may conclude from this statement that membership in the alliance had a stabilizing effect on a volatile situation. Although the events of mid-1974 plagued NATO and the cohesion of the southern region, war had been prevented. The southern region is ripe with obstacles and at times charged with rhetoric between "friends," the conflicts have largely been contained. President Papandreou of Greece attempted to walk a tightrope in the region by maintaining ties with the US and NATO while overtly declaring that "...we don't believe in the two armed camps, Warsaw Pact and NATO."<sup>(15)</sup> However, because of her geographic setting as an island nation, Greece has been

forced to consider as "friends" those powers that dominate the Mediterranean. NATO membership again draws a country such as Greece into the international arrangement and thereby opens dialogue with her neighbors.

The strategic importance of the southern region was unquestioned throughout NATO's forty years. Introduction of the alliance to this region was risky, yet paid extremely high dividends. While open conflict was not avoided, influence from fellow alliance members certainly contributed to increasing the conflict threshold and providing a diplomatic vehicle to open communication.

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### **The Russian Problem**

The most difficult and critical diplomatic effect that faces NATO and the West is how the Russian Federation responds to the membership question. Russia must be drawn into the decision if for no other reason than her sheer size, geostrategic position in both Europe and Asia, and her military power. The vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union has left in Russia a political void which is being filled with a renewed nationalism. This nationalism carried to an extreme could have damaging effects on her transformation to a democratic state. The Russian democratic experience is perhaps the most fragile of the East-bloc countries. Russia must overcome two major difficulties. First, there are the lingering effects of more than 70 years of totalitarianism (not 40 years as in Eastern Europe.) Second, there is a great ethnic and cultural diversity that exists within the borders of today's Russian Federation.(16)

Russia is the only state in the region capable of becoming more than a regional power. More than half the former Soviet population, about 150 million people, lives there. There are also 25 million Russians living outside Russia's border, many with loyalty to Russia.(17) Russia has two critical ingredients to success in the economic reforms: abundant resources and skilled workers. Russia controls 90 per cent of

the oil, nearly 80 per cent of the natural gas, 70 per cent of the gold production, and 62 per cent of the electricity output of the former Soviet Union.(18) Russia must be and will be the key player to political, economic, and military reform for the future of the region.

Proponents of expansion of some form of membership to the East and even to Russia believe the West must help remove great uncertainties from Russia's future. A world of friends, (if not allies) they believe, is a safer world.(19) Likewise, Russian reformers are desperate to form linkages to the West to lend legitimacy to her fledgling democratic institutions. Meanwhile, Russia's former client states of Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia, move towards the Western alliance. The West must provide confidence-building to Russia or it may begin to appear as though the iron curtain has merely moved east to the Russian border. For this reason, the West has been reluctant to move more quickly for fear of offending Russia's strategic sensibilities.(20) However, proponents of expansion believe it to be in the interest of Russia--especially Russian democrats--to have a zone of stability on its western flank.(21) Movement from the alliance toward Russia must be seen as a positive influence in the region, as opposed to a threat. It is generally agreed that the West must provide resources and skills to help develop the Russian economy as well as support in the democratization process. Therefore, why then should the West not take a hand in the military machine as well?(22) As one Western diplomat remarked after a crucial NATO meeting, "We stretched out our hand, but the hand was empty; we have got to put something into this hand."(23)

What can NATO do in addition to providing confidence to Russia of our peaceful intentions and stability to her neighborhood? NATO can provide verification processes to various reduction programs, help formulate the future design of a pan-European security structure,(24) and provide a forum for security issues and military exercises and exchanges. Above all, the West must be sensitive to the

Russian people. If they are forced to feel defeated and suffer humiliation such as the German Weimer in the 1920s, the nationalistic fervor mentioned earlier could tip the delicate balance of power in Moscow today. Russia must be brought into the equation and be given a role in Eastern Europe. An isolated Russia is something the West cannot afford, claim the proponents of membership expansion.

Those who preach caution argue that expansion of NATO shifts the balance of power unacceptably. No degree of persuasion that the extra stability on Russia's borders would only be beneficial could counteract the additional feeling of isolation from seeing erstwhile allies irrevocably switching sides.(25)

A critical issue in the Russian problem is the Ukrainian situation. In light of the uncertainties surrounding Russian democracy, an independent Ukraine acts as a strategic buffer between Europe and Russia. Unfortunately, the West views the Ukraine as a nuclear proliferation problem rather than a state with legitimate security concerns.(26) President Kravchuk vacillates on the giving up of nuclear weapons, yet blames his hesitancy on Western nations that failed to help Ukraine disarm by failing to provide adequate financial support and security guarantees.(27) However, many believe that the US must be very careful to avoid the impression that it is siding with states such as the Ukraine against Russia. This can only provoke those in Russia who are hostile to the US and to the democratic reforms in Moscow. Yet, the US can play a mediating role in these regional disputes. Certainly the political situation within Russia and the Republics will not be determined by foreigners, yet without the influence of the West the chance of failure looms high. The last and most crucial point is that if democracy fails in Russia, the chances are slim that it will survive in the other post-Soviet states.(28) Conversely, success in Russia to democratic reforms conversely does not guarantee success in the region. Yet, if a nationalist authoritarian government results from the power struggles in Moscow, it clearly would cause a threat to the

region, regardless of security agreements with the East-Central European countries.

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### **Burdensharing and Out-of-Area Operations**

The issues of burdensharing and out-of-area operations are not new to the NATO alliance. They have surfaced over the years, most recently during the Gulf War build up as well as post-war cost settlement. With the fall of the Soviet Union and appreciable reductions in US forces levels in Europe, one would be incorrect to assume these savings would end the burdensharing debate. To investigate the impact of expanded membership on these two important issues, it is necessary to review each issue separately.

The burdensharing debate is ostensibly about measuring financial burdens within the alliance. The origins of the debate began with the US in search of overseas basing rights. Although a war was being fought in Korea, the US was persuaded that a potential Soviet threat to Europe existed. Many people were caught in the albeit oversimplified comparison of a divided Korea and a divided Germany. The North Atlantic Council adopted a forward strategy to meet the threat as far east as possible. President Truman announced on 9 September 1950 a large build-up of forces in Germany which signified the end of US occupational status and the beginning of a semi-permanent military presence. As part of that presence, he clearly stated the intent of Europe to contribute to the force build-up.

The formal origins of the burdensharing debate are to be found in the great debate in the US Senate.(29) Two elements to the debate took shape here and were as much a political power struggle between Congress and the Executive branch as a debate about whether Europeans were shouldering their fair share of the security burden of Europe. Congress demanded that before committing additional ground troops to Europe, the JCS was to certify compliance with the requirements of



Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty which stated that "...by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid they (alliance members) will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."(30)

The 1950s were critical for future burdensharing disputes. The US had assumed the major responsibility for the defense of Europe on the assumption that Europe would sooner or later be inclined to take responsibility for its own defense, but this assumption proved to be a mistake.(31) US conventional forces became a hostage to the nuclear umbrella as a pull-out would possibly counter the guarantee. However, a realistic view of the situation shows the US gained an enormous strategic advantage with basing throughout Europe and the southern region. Additionally, the US was quick to point out burdensharing differences yet was unwilling to share responsibility and control of NATO strategy and implementation. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the allies were not persuaded to assume more financial responsibility without an increase in the decision making. It seems the future must include an increase of both burdensharing and responsibility sharing with the European allies. The NATO burdensharing debate has as much to do with alliance strategy and control as it does financial contribution. The lesson is clear: burdensharing without responsibility and direct access to the decision making of alliance policy and strategy will fail in the new European order as it has in the past.

Let me turn now to the specific cost of the alliance and what additional members may or may not bring to the alliance. It is difficult to establish notions of equality in burdensharing. The US prefers quantitative measures of "input," whereas Europeans prefer less quantifiable measures that emphasize hidden cost, dislocation, rent-free land, and conscription cost.

Needs to the alliance in basing rights may not be a high priority, but expanded membership could spread the burden (and economic benefit) further east. Assets

that are less tangible, yet important, may include exercise areas, training airspace, opposing force training teams, supplies storage, and communication links. These, along with additional forces, which may relax force requirements of the West European nations, will further add value to the alliance. Whether additional forces, bases, or regional stability are determined to be the benefit to NATO, the burden debate will continue. The debate, is clearly not only about burdensharing, but about powersharing.(32)

NATO out-of-area cooperation has been a subject of interest for academics as well as policy makers. The out-of-area issue has been a source of intra-alliance dispute since NATO was established. Suez (1956) and Indochina (1945-54) are well known, yet many more have occurred in the same period. Most disputes have occurred in areas distant from the alliance core. However, disputes of the future, or calls for out-of-area cooperation, will likely occur in the European neighborhood; witness recent requests for airpower in the former Yugoslavia. What impact does this issue have on the recruitment of new members? Does expanding membership pre-empt potential out-of-area conflict disputes or merely bring the conflict into the alliance? These questions are the subject of our discussion on out-of-area conflict regarding NATO membership.

In a bipolar world with clearly delineated blocs and two large alliance leaders, conflicting interests within the alliance are not likely to lead to its collapse. Allies simply have nowhere else to go. Conversely, in a multipolar system in which high mutual dependence coexists with realignment options, incompatible interests are more likely to lead to an alliance dispute and possible collapse.(33) In the multipolar scenario, all parties must be more cautious about intra-alliance disputes over out-of-area interests simply because there are other options available. Likewise, a reactionary or troublesome ally could be forced from the alliance without concern of contributing to the other camp. The demands in this scenario

are much greater on intra-alliance diplomacy. Therefore, it is with great caution that we consider new members to the alliance that may bring conflicts, internal to their country or from a neighboring country, to the already difficult out-of-area debate.

An example of a threat-defining dispute, which has been the cause for most out-of-area issues, was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The US was convinced that the invasion was a product of Western complacency and a European inducement of detente. The relatively calm response from European allies toward the invasion highlighted fundamental differences in US and NATO allies on the issue of the East-West relationship.(34)

With the demise of the Soviet Union and the failed economies, and ethnic diversity and hyper-nationalism along the fringes of the alliance, conflicts may break out and lead to out-of-area disputes. For example, conflicts on German borders with the potential for refugee problems will be of less concern to the United Kingdom than to Germany. If Ukraine maintains a nuclear capability, (albeit of questionable effectiveness) how will the European powers react to a preemptive attack by Russia to disable those weapons? Will the alliance perceive the threat unanimously, or will a dispute arise which erodes the purpose and effectiveness of the alliance and ultimately fails to promote stability in the region?

For these reasons and countless other potential out-of-area conflicts, the alliance must prepare itself to accept some form of security commitment to the East-Central European countries or be prepared to respond as a community to suppress conflict through diplomatic and economic initiatives. There are numerous other political/economic institutions within Europe which have been identified earlier. All institutions must bring pressure to bear as necessary to keep conflict from erupting in this highly charged area. Membership in the Atlantic Alliance will not guarantee a conflict-free Europe; if not approached properly, it may in fact heighten

tension. An important thought for the West to consider is that even though the US is unsure of the threat today, the newly free democracies of Eastern Europe are not. To them the threat is clear, and it lies near their borders to the East. An expanded alliance may provide diplomatic opportunity to resolve conflict early, within a structured security framework instead of squabbling among current members over the propriety of an out-of-area involvement.

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### **Democratization and Ethnic Acceptance**

The North Atlantic Treaty signed in 1949 affirmed that the signatories would safeguard freedom and individual liberties and was founded on the principles of democracy. Furthermore, in Article 2, parties will contribute towards peaceful relations by strengthening their free institutions. It would appear from the treaty preamble that member nations would be democratic in their government. However, we have seen that membership has not necessarily been tied to this assumption in the case of Portugal's acceptance or in the continual membership of Greece and Turkey as authoritarian military regimes ruled their respective countries. Yet future membership of East Central European countries and former Soviet republics should be tied to their progress towards democratization. In addition to the critical process towards democratization the West must be concerned with the treatment of minority groups within these countries. Ethnic resurgence, tribalism and ethnic clashes appear to have the lowest flash-point for open conflict.

To evaluate the propriety of membership based on democratization and acceptance of ethnic groups, we must investigate the process and the difficulties facing these countries in both critical areas.

It could be said that the East European and former Soviet Republics are in transition to democracy. Democracy, its parties, institutions, and fundamental

principles, take time to mature. Organizations, leadership, and a sense of responsibility of the people must be grown from within. Well-intentioned outside democratic assistance is unlikely to be effective if this assistance taints or delegitimizes the individuals or organizations it attempts to assist.(35) Economic assistance may be necessary, yet a changeover to a market-oriented economy does not insure a successful transition to democracy. However, structural changes such as expanding privatization should be started, and a way should be sought to leave control of production and prices to market demands of the consumers.(36) Therefore, from the perspective of democratization, the primary problem is to formulate and construct political institutions that provide channels for meaningful participation and sharing of power between competitive groups.(37)

Each nation charts its own course and moves in somewhat different directions at different speeds, with each bringing to bear its unique historical baggage.(38) Part of the historical baggage is the ethnic diversity of the region as well as the potential for hyper-nationalism. Ethnic nationalism may be positive or negative.(39) It may be cohesive in helping a group assert its cultural identity or it may become negative when it produces an ethnocentric bias, asserting as superior one group's culture, language, and religion over another. Thus, failure to assimilate ethnic or cultural minorities can become a serious obstacle to nation-building.

Ethnic or cultural conflict, if unresolved, can lead to clashes between nations and even between civilizations. Samuel Huntington makes a convincing argument for future major conflicts between civilizations, that is, groups of people not bound by nation-states, rather by culture, language, and especially religion. For example, Westerners, Chinese, and Arabs constitute separate civilizations. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, to cite two examples, have large numbers of peoples of different civilizations and are candidates for regional conflict and division.(40) According to

Professor Huntington, fault lines between civilizations are replacing political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as flash points.(41)

How are we to avoid these ethnic conflicts or evaluate the actions of these countries to determine whether alliance membership is appropriate? First, governments must provide equal opportunities in education, economic resources, cultural facilities, and political institutions. Second, they must also provide protection, preferential access to certain resources, and promote minority cultures.

It is of critical importance that the emerging countries of the East move towards democracy and ethnic acceptance if they are to join the West. Although democratic reform must evolve from within each country, NATO as well as European economic alliances can play a supporting role in this lengthy process.

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### **Path to Membership**

Membership in the North Atlantic Alliance has been based on what the individual nations can bring to the alliance. Contributions take many forms, such as basing rights, military capability, buffer zones, economic power, regional stability, and political influences. However, the strength of the alliance has been its ability to withstand the relative turmoil of nearly five decades of cold war. Many would argue that the bipolar nature of the world during this period and the focus on the mutually perceived threat was the cohesion that weathered the many storms. The glue is gone; yet the alliance continues to function, and with an expanding role in peacekeeping and other political functions, it may survive. Should it survive, the membership question for East Europe, Russia, and the former Soviet Republic must be resolved.

Historical review of the alliance provides interesting insight to past membership questions. Formation of an associate or command in the Middle East (MEDO) was

considered. A similar associate group could be created for Russia and the former republics. This organization would have separate planning groups, yet would have direct linkage with the parent organization (NATO). This concept certainly has some potential application for Russian and former Soviet Republic countries. Associate membership is not a new concept either. George Kennan, former State Department official, painted a somewhat vague yet interesting picture of an Atlantic pact comprising three separate tiers of membership.(42) In addition to full voting members, there would be associate as well as affiliate member categories. Although Kennan's plan was not seriously considered in 1949, it may have applicability today. Some commentators have since Kennan's day suggested that had the three-tiered membership formula been adopted, it may have provided links with some third world countries providing more of a worldwide security alliance.(43) The French experience in NATO demonstrates that while France was not involved in military command, the alliance recognized (as did France) the importance of involvement in the many other planning and research groups of the alliance. While France's position is unique, clearly the alliance has proven resilient to intra-alliance disputes. Although the French model is not advocated, it does suggest that full participation is not a prerequisite to membership.

A dual-track path to membership may be necessary; that is, a path for East Europeans and a separate path for Russia with her former republics. The East-Central European countries should be considered individually based on progress in democratization, human rights, and a commitment to peace and stability in the region. Membership questions about Russia and countries such as Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia may be considered as a group or as a separate command with direct linkage to NATO. This would provide incentives to work with their neighbors, strengthen fault lines where serious ethnic issues remain divisive, and allow the West to act as a mediator.

Europe is at a crucial juncture in world history. The US must recognize that a new partnership is in order--a partnership that can project democracy and stability. NATO, because of the many successes to which it has contributed in Europe, may be the vehicle to hold together lasting peace for a second half century.

### **Partnership for Peace**

The Clinton administration has devised a process which dangles potential NATO membership to all European nations including Russia. Called the Partnership for Peace, it involves some economic and political reform to prospective members, yet is ambiguous on more specific criteria. While clearly intended to please many different constituencies--President Yeltsin, new democracies, and reluctant NATO allies--the proposal in fact irritated many. Poland's President Lech Walesa, referring to the PFP, stated, "at the moment there is no sign of partnership. We understand the reason why the West, and particularly the US, is so concerned about Russia's reaction...we are also concerned about Russia's reaction." (44) While NATO officials deny giving Russia a veto on the membership question, it would appear that they have in fact been provided at least a temporary veto.

It is argued that waiting to take Central Europeans into NATO will only make it harder to confront Russia when and if its imperialist imperative is revived. Moscow cannot be allowed to continue to hold its neighbors in a Russian sphere of influence by opposing membership. (45)

The Partnership for Peace has clearly frustrated leaders of the Central European countries who are in search of security beyond committee memberships provided by NATO under the NACC. However, the Clinton administration argues that Russia must be included in security agreements and premature membership strengthens the evolving Russian nationalist movement led by Vladimir V. Zhirinovsky, a parliamentary leader. President Yeltsin also fears that immediate NATO



membership for countries on Russia's border sends a dangerous signal treating Russia as an enemy and not as a friend.

There is a possible back door security arrangement for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. If these countries are taken into the European Union (EU) as new members, they will have automatic access to Europe's defense organization, the WEU. All present members of the EU are members of NATO and most of the WEU forces are task under NATO also. Therefore, this could be a way to draw East Europeans under the NATO security umbrella. However, the long term implications of this arrangement may be counter to US national security interest of remaining fully engaged as a leader within the regional security setting.

Much of the attention given to the subject of NATO membership has focused on the process of PFP with little discussion about the interests and obligations that gives membership meaning. Given the West's record in Yugoslavia, it is no longer clear that multilateral peace operations would be the anticipated promising aspects of US.-Russian cooperation. A stated US. interest in the region composed of the former Soviet Republics has been stability. It can be argued that Russia does not share this same interest and is far more interested in "influence" as opposed to "stability." For these reasons pursuing a policy of Russia first, before such countries as Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary may damage relations with these countries without meaningful reform in Russia. Russia may become a global partner, but she is not a global power. Where she does remain a power-on her own periphery-she may not choose to be a partner.(46)

East Europe is likely to view a partnership based on Russian interests as counter to their interest and made at their expense. Therefore, any partnership must be based on a crucial test of common interest by all parties to accept the independence of Eastern and Central Europe. NATO may have already passed the best opportunity to expand membership to the East. It is difficult to envision a Russia

that again invites the dramatic change and reform initiatives of the early 1990s. Likewise, the West likely has over-estimated its ability to influence politics within Russia. Hoping to avoid adding support to the "nationalist" movement by delaying membership, the West should now recognize that meaningful political dialogue in Russia will come primarily from within.

As for now PFP is the only game in town. The West has come to realize that its interest and the national interest of Russia will not always coincide. Therefore, the interest of the Alliance must be pursued and if those interest include membership expansion to countries that meet the stated goals, so be it.

The alliance must better communicate clear guidance for membership or risk a serious loss of credibility and resolve. If the additional members provide resources, stability to Europe, and strength to the alliance, then full membership status should come quickly. Further delay will only make future decisions more difficult, and even dangerous as the reform movement in Russia stagnates and may even be reversed.

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**\*\*Endnotes\*\***

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